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ABSTRACT

The project groups "Preparedness for Peace" at the Malmo School of Education in Sweden studies ways of helping children and young people to deal constructively with questions of peace and war. As part of this work, experts with special interest and competence in areas related to peace education are interviewed. These interviews explore the views of Mitsuo Okamoto and Bogdan Rowinski. Mitsuo Okamoto is professor of peace studies at Hiroshima Shudo University and president of the Peace Studies Association of Japan. Bogdan Rowinski has been attached to a Youth Problems Research Institute in Warsaw, working with questions related to peace education, including beliefs about the future and attitudes to war and peace among young people. (Author)

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PEACE EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES FROM JAPAN AND POLAND

Mitsuo Okamoto
Bogdan Rowiński
and
The Project "Preparedness for Peace"

The project group "Preparedness for Peace" at the Malmö School of Education in Sweden studies ways of helping children and young people to deal constructively with questions of peace and war. As part of this work, experts with special interest and competence in areas related to peace education are interviewed.

This publication explores the views of Mitsuo Okamoto and Bogdan Rowiński. Mitsuo Okamoto is professor of peace studies at Hiroshima Shudo University and president of the Peace Studies Association of Japan. Bogdan Rowiński has been attached to a Youth Problems Research Institute in Warsaw, working with questions related to peace education, including beliefs about the future and attitudes to war and peace among young people.

PEACE EDUCATION: A CONVERSATION WITH MITSUO OKAMOTO, HIROSHIMA SHUDO UNIVERSITY, JAPAN

1.

ÅB: As an introduction, could you say a few words about yourself and your interest in the field of "peace education"?

MO: My name is Mitsuo Okamoto, and I come from Japan. I teach at Hiroshima Shudo University. At the moment I am president of the Peace Studies Association of Japan, which has over 700 members. We will be the host organization of the next IPRA Conference in 1992.

I have been engaged in Peace Studies instruction for the last 17 years or so. I am the founder of the first formal university level peace studies course in Japan, created in 1976, but I was teaching in this area even before the establishment of this formal course. Three years ago this was developed into an international peace studies course utilizing five faculty members. This was at my former university, Shikoku Gakuin University. Since April, 1990 I have been at Hiroshima Shudo University, where I am also professor of peace studies. A new peace studies course was set up there in the Department of International Political Science. So I have been teaching peace studies to university students for the last 16 or 17 years.

2.

ÅB: What do you think of first when you hear the words "peace education"?

MO: Well, we have a very special history of peace education in Japan, which was started mainly by the Hiroshima-Nagasaki survivors and later joined by teachers. Because peace education is often seen as connected with leftist politics, when you say peace education, some people who claim to be neutral have certain reservations whether one should support it or not. So I don't use the word peace education, but peace studies, to make the content – which is nothing but peace education – more acceptable to people who have some standard preconceived idea about what peace education is. Also, I feel that I can include more subject matter in peace studies than we would under the heading of peace education. For example, violence against nature, the destruction of nature can be easily be included in peace studies. For the university level, the term peace studies, I think, gives some impression of a) a more comprehensive content and b) a more higher-education oriented subject matter than peace education.

ÅB: When you think of the school level, would you then use the term peace

education, or would you use the expression peace studies also for the younger students?

MO: I have been thinking about this possibility, but I think peace studies may sound a little too sophisticated for elementary school children, for example.

ÅB: Would you like to think of peace education as also including other things than knowledge? Would it also deal with values and attitudes, for example?

MO: Yes, definitely. It must include not only knowledge, cognition, but also values and attitudes. In addition, the teaching must be more experience-oriented. Transferring knowledge to one another is not enough, so I usually take students to places like Hiroshima and Nagasaki or to an island in the Philippines where people live in a very poor situation. It is very stimulating for students, because they see what real poverty is, and they experience what the Hiroshima people have been suffering. I arrange conversations with the survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the students. These people are aging and very fond of talking with young people, and the students are excited to talk with these people and share their experience, and this is a very stimulating encounter.

3.

ÅB: If you think back on your own school days, were there some aspects in your schooling that might be considered an attempt at "peace education"?

MO: On the contrary. I was educated during the war time, and then every unit was related to war education. It was only after Japan was defeated that the teachers changed their attitude 180 degrees and started talking about democracy, peace, freedom and so forth. I am grateful for this short period after the war where a genuine peace education was practiced in Japanese schools – junior high schools and senior high schools. I think teachers then were excited about the peace constitution of Japan, which forbids the solution of international disputes by using armed forces, and they really believed in this peace constitution – first because we lost the war, and second because of the experiences related to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and I think I am a child, so to speak, of this after-war peace education.

4.

ÅB: Do you believe that schools in your country, as you know them today, contribute to a "peace education"?

MO: I have a very negative evaluation of our present system. Japanese

people have gained confidence because of our economic success, and now many Japanese people, particularly conservative people, are becoming very nationalistic again. This is also reflected in the curriculum in the school education. For example, the Japanese Minister of Education discourages the teachers from teaching about Japanese aggression in the Korean peninsula and in China. Euphemistic terms are used to make the past sound neutral or even beautiful. For example, it is emphasized that we built up the infrastructure in Korea, and therefore Korea was able to develop its technology. We find a self-glorifying re-evaluation of the Japanese involvement in the Pacific war. I think teaching this is detrimental to children. We need a more objective history of the violent relations between Japan and other countries, where war was the perpetuator of violence. So my answer to your question is that I think schools in my country are contributing to the opposite of peace education. Also, the recent resurgence of the popularity of the imperial (Tenno) system strengthens the more nationalistic, self-centered type of education.

ÅB: Is this a very general phenomenon, or are there schools or teachers that work in a more peace-oriented way?

MO: Very general.

5.

ÅB: Do you think it is at all possible for schools to contribute to a "peace education"? If so, what are some of the steps and measures to be taken that you think of first?

MO: Yes, it's possible. It's difficult in Japan, because the Minister of Education imposes certain restrictions or constraints on teachers by guidelines, and teachers are required to stick to these in their teaching. They cannot deviate from these guidelines, which are very nationalistic and self-centered. But at the same time I think that *if* the teachers were well-trained in peace education, or *if* they spent two or three months in a course on peace education or peace research during the summer period, perhaps in another country, then perhaps the guidelines formulated by the government, I think, would not be equally constraining, and the teachers could do a lot for peace education.

ÅB: Would you think that there would be possibility in Japan to influence the school system or the guidelines for teaching so that there would be more peace education?

MO: At the moment: No. As long as the Liberal-Democratic Party continues to rule, it is, I think absolutely impossible to influence this.

Katsuya Kodama reported in Nagasaki, when we had the peace education conference ten days ago, that in Sweden, peace education is even encouraged by the school authorities. Unless the government changes from the Liberal-Democratic Party to the Socialist Party, for example, this is not possible in Japan. So we are hoping for a change of government.

6.

ÅB: What would be some of the possible differences in peace education approaches among younger and older students in schools?

MO: This, I think, is a difficult question to answer. However, I think peace education for the smaller children can often start from the actions of the children. For example, young children are, in my experience, interested in ridiculing other children because of differences they have. For instance, if somebody has a different accent, the other children ridicule him or her. This kind of aggressive attitude of the majority can be corrected in some way, so that the young children can be made to understand that people are different in many ways – some people speak the same language with a different accent. They can be shown audio-visual material where related stories are communicated. With the older students, I think various kinds of fieldwork are perhaps more effective, and the students can easily leave campus. With younger children one must be very careful in taking them to the streets or to some violent sector of a larger city, while older students can do that, being themselves very careful about their own protection.

7.

ÅB: If you were an upper-secondary school teacher in a subject with which you are particularly familiar, how would you like to make the students more conscious of and more prepared for problems of peace, within that subject?

MO: I think that in most subjects I would use methods similar to those I referred to earlier. I invite the survivors of Hiroshima to come to my class and have them speak to my students; this is more effective in making the students conscious of the peace issues than if I just told them about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I also think the audio-visual method is more effective than just the lecture type of instruction. Thirdly, I think students must leave campus to learn by working, to learn by looking at situations which lack peace, in our country or overseas.

8.

ÅB: In international debates, the terms "disarmament education" and "peace education" have been used, in addition to some other related terms ("global education", "education for international understanding" etc.). Do you have any comments and preferences as to this terminology?

MO: We touched on this earlier. I prefer the term "peace studies" or "peace research", or even expressions like "conflict resolution". I tend to avoid the term "peace education", since it has a certain negative connotation in some circles. However, in Japan there are differences of opinion in this respect, and every year we have a peace education symposium. Usually it takes place in Hiroshima, but this year it took place in Nagasaki. There the term "peace education" is in focus. It is mainly visited by junior high and senior high teachers and elementary school teachers. We organized a university peace studies section about five years ago, but this is a minority in this set-up. This year I was the keynote speaker of the symposium. The symposia are arranged by a permanent organization, called, I think, The Hiroshima Institute for Peace Education; the headquarters is in Hiroshima. This group also publishes a magazine on peace education.

9.

ÅB: In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with parents or other members of the community, when introducing peace education in schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?

MO: One of the difficulties will be that "peace" is often seen as connected with communism and socialism, with people to the left or something like that, and if the members of the board of education in a certain place are conservative, then they don't like the introduction of peace education in schools. Then I try to persuade these people by using the term "peace studies", stressing that in peace studies we deal not only with education against war, but also with human rights, violence against nature, equality, democracy etc.

ÅB: But since word "peace" is used in both expressions, wouldn't peace studies be as "bad" as peace education?

MO: Logically this is true. But I think that peace education in our country is now a set term with some unfortunate connotations; but what is peace studies? I use this latter term as an opportunity to explain that I have in mind, what I want to communicate.

10.

ÅB: What needs to be done in teacher training in order to prepare future teachers more adequately for the area of "peace education"?

MO: There are two ways. One is to introduce the full-fledged peace studies course in the old pedagogical department to teach peace studies. Teachers can be trained by taking some three or four core courses on peace studies, and then this can be a major contribution to the ability of teachers to teach about peace when they become professional teachers. Secondly, if this is not possible, we could set up a kind of summer course, as in-service training for teachers, for four or five weeks, giving them an opportunity to get themselves immersed in the area of peace, whereby we not only teach teachers the various contents of peace studies, but also the attitude or the basic philosophy related to peace education. In other words, we would deal with a peaceful way of living, a peaceful life style which does not violate other people's human rights or the rights of other living beings. So it should not only cover the transfer of knowledge, but should also deal with peaceful behavior where we refrain from exploiting nature and other people.

ÅB: You mentioned two possibilities: Would you say that some of these opportunities exist in Japan today?

MO: The international peace studies course in my former university is within the sociology department, but it can also be offered to teacher trainees. And the same is true of some other peace studies courses. So it does exist to a limited extent. The second form does not exist at present in Japan. But the peace education symposium mentioned earlier – which lasts for only two days – can be mentioned here again: It's not a satisfactory institution for in-service training, but something which *partly* fulfills what I have in mind. I heard that some African students study peace research in Oslo for a couple of summer months, being able to go back to educate children about peace. This kind of long-term arrangement is very much desirable.

11.

ÅB: In many schools, the students represent a variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds. To what extent would it be possible to use this fact as an aid in education for peace? Would you expect some difficulties in doing so?

MO: We have an increasing number of students from the Philippines, Thailand, Indo-China, Taiwan, China, Korea, and other countries. Not only

students, but also workers come to Japan from these countries to earn Japanese money, which is a strong currency today. So in any university, as opposed to 10-15 years ago, we have a number of foreign students on the campuses. I think it is a great opportunity, particularly since Japan has become more nationalistic and self-centered, to have these students talk about their own country, thereby having students listen to these foreign students, noting their different world views or different customs. I think this kind of exposure to different foreign cultures could open up the narrow-minded attitude of Japanese students if it's done properly. If it's done without any preparation, such communication might strengthen the prejudice against foreigners. But if it's well prepared, then I think this kind of communication is a unique opportunity whereby people could become more internationally minded, more open-minded, they could be made to understand that people are basically the same all over the world with many values and with peaceful intentions.

12.

ÅB: Sometimes the term "global survival" is used to refer to an area dealing both with the risks of nuclear war and with the risks of far-reaching environmental damage through pollution and overuse of resources. How do you look upon dealing with these two categories of risks together in school? Do you have any suggestions as to how the teacher could approach the problem area of environmental damage?

MO: I don't think they are two categories, in fact. In my view, the nuclear catastrophe is a form of violence which is a symbol of all violence, all phenomena of violence, manifested in different ways. The nuclear power is not war, but the Chernobyl nuclear accident illustrates that it may damage the environment, kill people, and devastate the entire region. Violence (war) between nations, violence against the weak within a society, the poor people, and violence against nature – the ecological issue – they are all related. I don't regard these different phenomena as different categories, but rather they belong to the same category revolving around the concept of violence. Therefore my concept of peace is more comprehensive than just the absence of war; it deals with absence of all those kinds of violence.

13.

ÅB: Is there anything else that you would like to add about the school and peace education?

MO: I think more international exchange of educational ideas would be

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very important. Japanese teachers in general know very little about how school children can be taught about peace, war, violence, ecology, racism and so forth, but such an opportunity of exchange might be very helpful. So I think that extended international interaction of peace educators or peace researchers in different countries is extremely important. This is what we have been doing in our IPRA conferences, but I think it is important to get the politicians involved, get the bureaucrats at the ministries of education involved in this kind of international exchange of information. We hope that our politicians, people working in our Ministry of Education or people who are serving the Board of Education in the local area will have some opportunity to have communication with teachers and officers in the educational ministries in other countries, for example in the Scandinavian countries or other parts of Europe.

PEACE EDUCATION: A CONVERSATION WITH BOGDAN ROWIŃSKI, POLAND

1.

ÅB: As an introduction, could you say a few words about yourself and your interest in the field of "peace education"?

BR: After my studies at the University of Warsaw, the Faculty of Education, I had teaching jobs in different schools for youngsters. Then I changed to study youth problems in a research institute. I started work there in 1986, so I have worked about four years now as a researcher. The general idea of our work has been to answer questions from various bodies of the government, and I can also initiate questions myself and try to answer these questions. The questions studied are usually connected with the present situation of our country. From the beginning of my job at the institute, I have worked with peace education.

ÅB: Could you describe a little bit more the work of this research institute and its department of peace education?

BR: The origin of this department is the patriotic and defense education. I think that this concept has a longer tradition in Poland than peace education. The questions for this patriotic education usually came from the military service, because the idea of patriotic education is to prepare young people to serve for their country. Of course, it is difficult to ignore the question of peace education, so recently the boss of the institute decided to develop this problem area, and the term "peace education" was added to the name of our department to make it wider. The leader of the department is a professor of education, and then there are two girls and I as research staff; we all have a doctoral degree.

ÅB: I know that the institute has made several surveys. Could you briefly say something about these surveys; what were their aims and general character?

BR: In general, the aim of the surveys has been to describe youth consciousness, in various areas. In the area of ecology we call it ecology consciousness; in the area of peace we call it peace consciousness; and in the area of patriotic defence, patriotic consciousness. Then a second aim has been to make proposals for educational practice in school programs, for youth organizations and for youth policy. The third aim has been to make proposals to government bodies, for instance to the Ministry of Youth or the Ministry of Defense.

ÅB: How do you use the word "consciousness" in this connection? When

you say "peace consciousness", for example, how would you define it?
BR: This is quite difficult to say briefly. In the literature there is no such concept of "peace consciousness". We use the term "consciousness" to describe youth attitudes and opinions in general, but then we have measured youth attitudes towards specific areas with specific instruments. When I have measured views in one area, I can use an operational definition of "consciousness" in that area.
ÅB: You use the expressions "patriotic consciousness" and "patriotic education". These are terms which are unusual in Sweden. Would there not be some kind of conflict between the patriotic education and peace education?
BR: Yes, there might be, because patriotic education is education which aims to prepare young people to handle arms. In the defense situation they should be prepared to defend their country, and one of the founda- tions of this attitude is the view of the enemy. You need to have an enemy to prepare yourself to protect yourself against him. In general, in peace education we say there are no real enemies, so this, I think, is some possible conflict between the two concepts.
ÅB: Has patriotic education been a concept used for a long time in Poland?
BR: Yes. It is related to the situation of the two political blocks.

2.
ÅB: What do you think of first when you hear the words "peace education"?
BR: I think that this is one of the most important areas of education. To me, first of all, this is a positive education: it is education towards something – real peace. But it includes also negative education, it is education against something – against armament and the arms race etc. This is an education which starts at birth, and it never ends.
ÅB: If you were to say something more specific about what you would strive for in peace education, could you give some examples?
BR: In general, this is education to prepare people to change the world in a positive way and to make them feel that they are able to change it. You feel you can do something, and if you feel this, you are responsible, so the next step is education towards responsibility. This is in general terms, and of course we can also set up different particular goals for different age levels.

At the kindergarten level, for example, the children do not have wide knowledge, so we have to focus on creating positive emotions towards other children – black children, yellow children and people from other countries. We have to teach them how to cooperate on the globe, so this will be an aim

of education at the lowest level. Then, the more mature our boys and girls are, the more we can spell out more detailed aims in three areas: knowledge, values and motivation.

ÅB: When you say values, what values would you especially think about in this context?

BR: I think that peace itself is a value, but it is not enough to describe it in this way. To make peace we need social justice, social care and other things which, taken together, mean peace. We have to develop those values in our students that make them able to create peace in a broad sense. This includes, for example, choosing non-violent ways of solving problems.

3.

ÅB: If you think back on your own school days, were there some aspects in your schooling that might be considered an attempt at peace education?

BR: Yes, there were some aspects, but I think most of them represent "negative education". When I finished school in the 60s, we read many texts about the Second World War, and they created negative attitudes towards violence. I think it is quite important to educate in the negative way like this, but it is not enough.

ÅB: Since you mentioned the concept of patriotic education, was there in your school some emphasis on that?

BR: Yes. We had a special subject at school, preparation for the defence. The teacher explained modern armaments, and then he explained why we should protect our country – because we love our country – the emotional relation with the country was emphasized – because we must protect what we have built up, because we must protect our tradition, our history.

ÅB: Was there a strong emphasis on this in your school?

BR: Yes, it was quite important.

4.

ÅB: Do you believe that schools in your country, as you know them today, contribute to a "peace education"?

BR: Yes, I think they contribute, but not to the extent they should and could. You are familiar with the Associated Schools Project of Unesco. We have it in Poland also, and I think this is quite an effective method of creating peace education. But unfortunately, there are just a few schools of this type, so I think that many of our schools do not use the possibilities they have.

5.

ÅB: Do you think it is at all possible for schools to contribute to a "peace education"? If so, what are some of the steps and measures to be taken that you think of first?

BR: Yes, I think it is possible. But schools need good programs for this kind of education, well-trained teachers and I think new methods as well.

ÅB: What would be some of the things that you come to think of that a teacher could do in the classroom to promote peace education?

BR: Let's think about 16-17-year-old boys: The teacher can teach them how to solve conflicts in different ways. So when somebody sees something on TV, he is better equipped to evaluate this – he can evaluate the solutions. Maybe he feels that other solutions would be better. The teacher should emphasize that the world is not just one-dimensional. The student should see the world from a perspective of alternatives. Hopefully this makes people more flexible – they will be more ready to listen to the opinions of others.

6.

ÅB: What would be some of the possible differences in peace education approaches among younger and older students in schools?

BR: I think the differences should be adapted to the level of psychological development of the students. In kindergarten we should start to create positive attitudes to different people – to people of different views, and to teach children to cooperate with different people – to teach them to be tolerant of differences. The more the pupils grow up, the more we should develop responsibility and motivation to act.

ÅB: What do you think could be done in the classroom to develop responsibility?

BR: I think that an important condition is to train the pupils to decide what to do by themselves. When dealing with a poor country with many problems and in need of aid, the teacher can put the problem to the class: What can *we* do? We cannot go there and build houses for instance, but we can do something. The pupils will forward suggestions, discuss and make decisions. Perhaps they decide to collect medicines after checking with a doctor. Perhaps they can invite a child for vacation.

7.

ÅB: If you were an upper-secondary school teacher in a subject with which you are particularly familiar, how would you like to make the students more conscious of and more prepared for problems of peace, within that

subject?
BR: I thought about history and language. Let's take language. First, there is the selection of texts for those students. At this level they are quite mature, so we can choose different texts, not only from classical literature, but also from modern literature and even from journals about political matters – to develop the students' understanding of the world. And I think that international contacts could be quite a good method. I think that the average school can organize something for small groups. It's quite possible to invite a few students from another country and give them accommodation for three days. Such personal contact can be a good way of changing views and attitudes.
ÅB: You also mentioned history. What would you do in history?
BR: To me it is quite dangerous to see history simply as a book of dates and other facts. I think that instead we should teach history as the process of changing things through human activity. Nothing in history happens without human decisions. If something is wrong now, we can change it to make it right. But we should avoid making our students learn dates and unrelated facts by heart – kings, presidents and battles.

8.
ÅB: In international debates, the terms "disarmament education" and "peace education" have been used, in addition to some other related terms ("global education", "education for international understanding" etc.). Do you have any comments and preferences as to this terminology?
BR: To me peace education is the most general concept and "disarmament education" is a more limited area dealing with the negative side of peace education, for instance. "Education for international understanding and human rights" is also one part of peace education.
ÅB: Is peace education a common conception in your country?
BR: Yes.

9.
ÅB: In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with parents or other members of the community, when introducing peace education in schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?
BR: I don't think we will meet many difficulties in school or with parents. I think that the experience of Poland proves that peace is the only way to live

and develop, but there may be some difficulties in handling peace education properly. For example, there is the danger of indoctrination; we must be careful not to show only one side of a problem or stress only one solution as the correct one.

ÅB: Do you think that teachers would see some conflict between what you call patriotic education and peace education?

BR: Yes, they may experience some difficulty, I think.

ÅB: Is that something that has been discussed among teachers?

BR: I don't know very much about this. I think that the most important thing is the international situation. If it develops in a positive way, like now, without tension, we can leave the defense problems and we can pay more attention to peace education. But if there is new tension, the preparation of young people to handle arms will again come into focus, and the conflict mentioned may be more obvious.

10.

ÅB: What needs to be done in teacher training in order to prepare teachers more adequately for the area of "peace education"?

BR: I think that the most important problem for teachers and also for pupils is a feeling of helplessness. I have talked to many people about these issues, and they say: What can you do? You can do nothing about nuclear weapons. This is a very common feeling, and it is also present among teachers. So first we have to create the feeling of being able to influence things. If the teacher feels that he can change things, he will teach children in the same spirit. The next thing, in my opinion, is new programs for the schools. The programs of the schools are quite old now and not up-to-date.

ÅB: Would you say that peace education today is attended to in teacher training?

BR: I think usually it is not. I don't know the details, but I don't think it is given much attention.

11.

ÅB: In many schools the students represent a variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds. To what extent would it be possible to use this fact as an aid in education for peace? Would you expect some difficulties in doing so?

BR: Poland is in a different situation than many other countries, because we are a fairly homogeneous nation. There are some small minorities, but we see ourselves as one nation. So this is not a problem that teachers face every

day, but there are some signs of this problem, and I think that in anticipation we should prepare teachers and children to be tolerant towards people from other nations. We have now a very small immigration, but since the 70s Poland has opened "windows and doors", so the situation will gradually change.

12.
ÅB: Sometimes the term "global survival" is used to refer to an area dealing both with the risks of nuclear war and with the risks of far-reaching environmental damage through pollution and overuse of resources. How do you look upon dealing with these two categories of risks together in school? Do you have any suggestions as to how the teacher could approach the problem area of environmental damage?
BR: I think that the teacher should explain the problems and should show the possibilities to influence those two threats. The attitude should be: "We are able to do something." The teacher should also show *different ways* of reacting: not only to protest, but to contribute to solutions. The teacher should try to create situations that stimulate the students to develop activities. If we talk about pollution and environmental damage, planting new trees, for example, is an activity which can be undertaken in every school. It is important that the children feel they have done something.
ÅB: Is this question attended to in Polish schools at the present time?
BR: Yes, it's very important. It's very popular in the mass media to talk about going from global challenges to local changes. There are many activities at the local level, for example, in cooperation with environmental groups, to protect the environment.
ÅB: Is that a recent thing in your country?
BR: Yes, I think it's quite a new thing.

12.
ÅB: Is there anything else that you would like to add about the school and peace education?
BR: Yes, I think that we should further develop the system of the Unesco Associated Schools. We should make it possible for each school to establish international contacts. International contacts are a very adequate method to use in peace education.
ÅB: If we go back to your own studies once more: What would be some of the more important findings that you have had in your surveys in relation to peace education?

BR: One example is this: I have asked schoolboys in which areas of life they feel you can make a change and in which you cannot. I wanted to describe their image of empowerment and powerlessness – where they feel they can do something and where they feel that they cannot. For instance, with respect to peace in the world they answered: we can do nothing – our influence is very limited. Disarmament: we can do nothing. But international contacts: we can do a lot. Development of national culture in the spirit of peace: we can do a lot. Changes in our school: we can do a lot. Changes in our work: we can do a lot. So the general picture seems to be that our feeling of empowerment is strongest in the closest life circles, but when we go out into the international world, this feeling decreases. This tells us, I think, where to start peace education – we should start where young people feel they can do something: in the family, at school, at work, in youth exchange and cultural activities.

Another result which in my opinion is very important is this. I ask the students questions like: How do you feel in the present world – do you feel secure? Do you feel threatened? Do you feel helpless? Most of them felt threatened and helpless in the face of the dangers of nuclear war and also in relation to the dangers of pollution. We get quite a pessimistic view when more than 60 % of the young population tell you they feel threatened and helpless. What responsibility will they take? Of course, we can doubt the results of a questionnaire. But I think that this result pattern is quite important. The feeling is real – the young people told me what they felt. And it should be important to deal with this situation.

Note: The Youth Problems Research Institute referred to in the interview was closed December 31, 1990.

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